THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, the 6th November 1947.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at eleven of the clock, Mr. President (THE HON. SRI R. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAJU) in the Chair.

I.—SWEARING IN OF NEW MEMBER.

Sri M. K. Sundararama Ayyar was sworn in.

II.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Import of skimmed milk powder.

* 99 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO: Will the Hon. Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government either directly or through the Government of India imported large quantities of skimmed milk powder;

(*b*) if the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, what the quantity imported is and the cost of the same;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that the imported stuff came in wooden barrels and had to be repacked here;

(*d*) whether tenders were called for undertaking the repacking work;

(*e*) whether Messrs. Parry & Co. were given the contract for repacking the skimmed milk powder received in wooden barrels;

(*f*) if so, what the terms of contract with Messrs. Parry & Co. were;

(*g*) whether it is a fact that the Dehydrating factory at Ranipet was placed at the disposal of Messrs. Parry & Co., free of charge;

(*h*) whether Messrs. Parry & Co. were given interest-free advances also and if so, what the total amount of such advances was;

(*i*) whether they were paid any other charges besides advances and if so, what the total amount involved is;

(*j*) whether Messrs. Parry & Co. were paid the expenditure incurred by them before the date of contract and if so what the amount is; and

(*k*) what the considerations were which impelled Government to undertake to reimburse expenditure prior to the date of the contract?

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THE HON. DR. P. SUBBARAYAN (on behalf of Hon. Minister for Food) :—" (*a*) Yes, through the Government of India.

" (*b*) The Government imported about 6,430 tons of skimmed milk powder at an approximate cost of 103 lakhs of rupees.

" (*c*) Out of the total quantity of 6,430 tons imported, about 4,750 tons of milk powder were received in big wooden barrels weighing about 224 lb. each and had to be repacked in small containers to prevent deterioration of the milk powder.

" (*d*) No.

" (*e*) Yes.

" (*f*) Two copies of G.O. Ms. No. 445, Food, dated 10th June 1946, containing the terms and conditions of the contract are placed in the Library.

" (*g*) Yes.

" (*h*) Yes. A total amount of Rs. 11 lakhs was given to the Company as advances.

" (*i*) The attention of the hon. Member is invited to clause (10) of the terms of the contract embodied in G.O. Ms. No. 445, Food, dated 10th June 1946, wherein the charges to be paid by the Government to the Company for repacking the milk powder are enumerated.

" (*j*) Yes. A sum of Rs. 6,389-10-5 was paid to the Company in this respect.

" (*k*) The Government agreed to pay the Company towards such expenditure as it might have incurred in connexion with repacking work before the date of the Government Order, i.e., before 10th June 1946, from which date the contract was deemed to commence. This condition was made to cover the firm against expenses incurred on the staff, travelling allowance, etc., and on the purchase of the plates or containers between 12th May 1946 and 10th June 1946. The Company wanted the orders in the Government Order to take effect from 12th May 1946. But it was considered that if this was done, the Government would be letting themselves in for various items of indefinable expenditure, particularly overhead charges (Rs. 4,000 per month) factory overheads, etc. Hence a separate bill for the expenditure incurred by them before 10th June 1946 was asked for and the amount ultimately sanctioned was Rs. 6,389-10-5.

The Company was allowed to incur expenditure before the precise terms and conditions governing the arrangement were decided upon, for the following reasons :—

(1) The Government of India arranged for the supply of 4,500 tons of skimmed milk powder in barrels in lieu of whole milk powder to this province only on the undertaking that repacking in small containers would be done in a proper manner.

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(2) It was imperative that repacking should be taken up immediately not only to prevent deterioration of milk powder but also to start the supply to school children.

(3) The Government of India made enquiries to see if they could arrange for the repacking themselves before supply. The only one competent firm in Bombay was doing similar work for the Bombay Government and could take no more orders. The Government of India felt that they could take no risk by entrusting the work to any other firm and left it to the Madras Government to make their own arrangements. Messrs. Parry & Co., who were the only firm in Madras who could handle repacking on a large scale and on scientific lines were most unwilling to do this work but were persuaded to take it up. But if the work was to be undertaken by them, they wanted that immediate arrangements should be made to provide water, electricity, a minimum amount of essential factory furniture and equipment, etc. They also wanted time to assemble a proper staff for the factory. They had also to make arrangements to obtain as much tin plate and ready-made containers as possible to pack the milk powder after it arrived. Meanwhile the Rationing Adviser to the Government of India, who was then on a visit to Madras, doubted if it would be possible for any factory to undertake the work of repacking such a large quantity of milk powder properly. The Commissioner of Civil Supplies therefore ordered under date 29th April 1946, that Messrs. Parry & Co. should be asked to send a man immediately to Bombay to find out how the work was being done in Bombay and to report the results. All these items of expenditure were naturally incurred before the date of Government Order which was issued only on 10th June 1946."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Sir, may I know whether Government can refer hon. Members, in reply to questions, to a Government Order which is placed in the Library, and about which we are learning only now?"

THE HON. DR. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" I am prepared to have this question taken up to-morrow so that the hon. Member may peruse these Government Orders."

Questions 100 to 110 were answered on 21st October 1947.

Major religious institutions.

* 111 *Q.*—SRI S. B. ADITYAN : Will the Hon. the Premier be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of major religious institutions (assessable to contribution) coming under the Hindu Religious Endowments Act, during the years 1942–43, 1943–44, 1944–45, 1945–46 and 1946–47 ;